AMENDMENT(S) TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

means for receiving a request from a client for specified content;

means for communicating to the client the identity of a node server having the specified content stored thereon, thereby enabling the client to request transmission of the specified content from the node server; and

means for ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client, wherein an owner of the node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of the specified content to the client.

2. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the bandwidth and/or latency performance of the node server in transmitting the specified content to the client.

3. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 2, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the bandwidth and/or latency performance of the node server relative to the bandwidth and/or latency characteristics of one or more other node servers that can provide the specified content to the client.

4. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the number and/or topological proximity of one or more other node servers that can provide the specified content to the client.

5. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the incentive varies in accordance with the time of day at which the node server transmits the specified content to the client.

6. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the means for ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client further comprises means for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content.

7. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 6, wherein the means for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content further comprises means for obtaining information regarding when the content was delivered.

8. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 6, wherein the means for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content further comprises means for obtaining information regarding the bandwidth and/or latency performance associated with the transmission of the content.

9. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, further comprising:

means for identifying a plurality of node servers within the network that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

means for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers; and

means for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the specified content via the network from one of the candidate node servers.

10. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 9, further comprising:

means for determining the location of the client within the network;

means for identifying the locations of the plurality of node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

wherein the means for selecting one or more candidate node servers further comprises means for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client.

11. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 10, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

12. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, further comprising:

means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

means for providing the specified content to the node server.

13. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 12, wherein the means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content further comprises:

means for identifying the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

means for identifying the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

14. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 13, wherein the means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers is performed using an annealing method.

15. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, further comprising:

means for storing data identifying available content that can be obtained by a client; and

means for providing an identification of available content to the client.

16. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, further comprising means for storing data identifying the location of the node server.

17. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the content comprises visual content including moving images.

18. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the network is a computer network.

19. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 18, wherein the network is the Internet.

20. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the network is a television network.

21. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the network is a wireless communications network.

22. (Original) A system including an apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the apparatus is a core server, the system further comprising the node server, the node server comprising:

means for storing the specified content;

means for receiving a request to transmit the specified content to the client; and

means for transmitting the specified content to the client.

23. (Original) A system as in Claim 22, wherein:

the core server further comprises:

means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

means for providing the specified content to the node server; and

the node server further comprises means for receiving the specified content from the core server.

24. (Original) A system as in Claim 22, wherein the core server and the node server are each implemented at least in part in a computer.

25. (Original) A system as in Claim 22, wherein the node server is implemented at least in part in a television set-top box.

26. (Original) A system as in Claim 22, wherein the node server is implemented at least in part in a portable device.

27. (Original) A system as in Claim 22, the system further comprising the client, the client comprising:

means for transmitting the request for the specified content to the core server;

means for receiving the identity of the node server from the core server;

means for receiving the specified content from the node server.

28. (Original) A system as in Claim 27, wherein the node server and the client are each implemented at least in part in a television set-top box.

29. (Original) A system including an apparatus as in Claim 1, wherein the apparatus is a core server, the system further comprising the client, the client comprising:

means for transmitting the request for the specified content to the core server;

means for receiving the identity of the node server from the core server;

means for receiving the specified content from the node server.

30. (Original) A system as in Claim 29, wherein the client further comprises means for transmitting a request to the node server to transmit the specified content to the client.

31. (Original) A system as in Claim 29, wherein the client further comprises:

means for monitoring the characteristics of the transmission of the specified content from the node server to obtain auditing information regarding the transmission of the specified content from the node server to the client; and

means for transmitting the auditing information to the core server.

32. (Original) A system as in Claim 29, wherein the core server and the client are each implemented at least in part in a computer.

33. (Original) A system as in Claim 29, wherein the client is implemented at least in part in a television set-top box.

34. (Original) A system as in Claim 29, wherein the client is implemented at least in part in a portable device.

35. (Original) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

means for receiving a request for content from a client;

means for determining the location of the client within the network;

means for identifying the location of a plurality of node servers within the network that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon;

means for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client; and

means for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

36. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 35, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

37. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 35, further comprising means for storing a topological database including a topological map of the network, wherein the means for selecting uses the topological map in making determinations of topological proximity to the client.

38. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 37, wherein the topological database further includes data regarding bandwidth capacity and/or latency between at least some of the network sites included in the topological map.

39. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 35, further comprising means for ascertaining which of the one or more of the candidate node servers transmitted requested content to the client, wherein an owner of such node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of requested content to the client.

40. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 35, further comprising:

means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content; and

means for providing the specified content to the node server.

41. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 40, wherein the means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content further comprises:

means for identifying the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

means for identifying the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

42. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 41, wherein the means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers is performed using an annealing method.

43. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 35, further comprising:

means for storing data identifying available content that can be obtained by a client; and

means for providing an identification of available content to the client.

44. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 35, further comprising means for storing data identifying content stored by the plurality of node servers.

45. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 44, wherein the content comprises visual content including moving images.

46. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 35, wherein the network is a computer network.

47. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 46, wherein the network is the Internet.

48. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 35, wherein the network is a television network.

49. (Original) A system including an apparatus as in Claim 35, wherein the apparatus is a core server, the system further comprising one of the plurality of node servers, the node server comprising:

means for storing at least part of the requested content;

means for receiving a request to transmit content to the client; and

means for transmitting the requested content to the client.

50. (Original) A system as in Claim 49, the system further comprising the client, the client comprising:

means for transmitting a request for content to the core server;

means for receiving the identity of one or more candidate node servers from the core server;

means for selecting one or more of the candidate node servers from which to obtain content;

means for transmitting a request to a selected node server to transmit content to the client; and

means for receiving content in response to the request transmitted to the node server.

51. (Original) A system including an apparatus as in Claim 35, wherein the apparatus is a core server, the system further comprising the client, the client comprising:

means for transmitting a request for content to the core server;

means for receiving the identity of one or more candidate node servers from the core server;

means for selecting one or more of the candidate node servers from which to obtain content;

means for transmitting a request to a node server to transmit content to the client; and

means for receiving content in response to the request transmitted to the node server.

52. (Original) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

means for identifying which of a plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node servers that are part of the network, wherein at least one of the plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content is stored on redundant node servers;

means for receiving a request from a client that is part of the network for transmission of a set of content to the client, wherein at least part of the requested set of content is stored on redundant node servers;

means for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that have stored thereon at least part of the requested set of content; and

means for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

53. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, wherein the candidate node servers do not include all of the redundant node servers on which requested content is stored.

54. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, further comprising means for storing data representing a topological map of the network and means for determining the location of the client within the network, and wherein the means for selecting one or more candidate node servers further comprises means for selecting one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client.

55. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 54, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

56. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, further comprising means for ascertaining which of the one or more of the candidate node servers transmitted requested content to the client, wherein an owner of such node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of requested content to the client.

57. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, further comprising:

means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content; and

means for providing the specified content to the node server.

58. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 57, wherein the means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content further comprises:

means for identifying the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

means for identifying the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

59. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 58, wherein the means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers is performed using an annealing method.

60. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, further comprising:

means for storing data identifying available sets of content that can be obtained by a client; and

means for providing an identification of available sets of content to the client.

61. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, further comprising means for storing data identifying which of the plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node servers.

62. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, wherein the content comprises visual content including moving images.

63. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, wherein the network is a computer network.

64. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 63, wherein the network is the Internet.

65. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 52, wherein the network is a television network.

66. (Original) A system including an apparatus as in Claim 52, wherein the apparatus is a core server, the system further comprising one of the plurality of node servers, the node server comprising:

means for storing a set of content or part of a set of content;

means for receiving a request to transmit a set of content or part of a set of content to the client; and

means for transmitting the requested set of content or part of a set of content to the client.

67. (Original) A system as in Claim 66, the system further comprising the client, the client comprising:

means for transmitting a request for a set of content to the core server;

means for receiving the identity of one or more candidate node servers from the core server;

means for selecting one or more of the candidate node servers from which to obtain content;

means for transmitting a request to a node server to transmit a set of content or part of a set of content to the client; and

means for receiving a set of content or part of a set of content in response to the request transmitted to the node server.

68. (Original) A system including an apparatus as in Claim 52, wherein the apparatus is a core server, the system further comprising the client, the client comprising:

means for transmitting a request for a set of content to the core server;

means for receiving the identity of one or more candidate node servers from the core server;

means for selecting one or more of the candidate node servers from which to obtain content;

means for transmitting a request to a node server to transmit a set of content or part of a set of content to the client; and

means for receiving a set of content or part of a set of content in response to the request transmitted to the node server.

69. (Original) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a television network, comprising:

means for identifying which of a plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node server television set-top boxes that are part of the network;

means for receiving a request from a client television set-top box that is part of the network for transmission of a set of content to the client television set-top box, wherein at least part of the requested set of content is stored on one or more node server television set-top boxes;

means for selecting from the one or more node server television set-top boxes one or more candidate node server television set-top boxes; and

means for communicating the identity of the candidate node server television set-top boxes to the client television set-top box to enable the client television set-top box to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node server television set-top boxes.

70. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 69, further comprising means for ascertaining which node server television set-top boxes transmitted content to the client television set-top box and which content each node server television set-top box transmitted.

71. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 69, further comprising:

means for determining the location of the client television set-top box within the network;

means for identifying the locations of the one or more node server television set-top boxes on which at least part of the requested set of content is stored; and

wherein the means for selecting one or more candidate node server television set-top boxes further comprises means for selecting from the one or more node server television set-top boxes one or more candidate node server television set-top boxes that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client television set-top box.

72. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 69, further comprising:

means for identifying a network site that will act as a node server television set-top box for distribution of the specified content, comprising:

means for identifying the location of a prospective node server television set-top box that

desires to act as a node server television set-top box for distribution of the specified content;

means for identifying the location of one or more other existing node server television set-top boxes that can act as a node server television set-top box for distribution of the specified content;

means for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server television set-top box to the existing node server television set-top boxes, wherein the prospective node server television set-top box is selected as a node server television set-top box for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server television set-top box satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node server television set-top boxes; and

means for providing the specified content to the node server television set-top box.

73. (Original) Apparatus as in Claim 69, wherein the content comprises visual content including moving images.

74. (Original) A system including an apparatus as in Claim 69, wherein the apparatus is a core server, the system further comprising a node server television set-top box, the node server television set-top box comprising:

means for storing the content;

means for receiving a request to transmit content to a client television set-top box; and

means for transmitting content to a client television set-top box.

75. (Original) A system as in Claim 74, the system further comprising the client television set-top box, the client television set-top box comprising:

means for transmitting a request for content to the core server;

means for receiving the identity of a candidate node server television set-top box from the core server;

means for receiving content from a node server television set-top box.

76. (Original) A system including an apparatus as in Claim 69, wherein the apparatus is a core server, the system further comprising the client television set-top box, the client television set-top box comprising:

means for transmitting a request for content to the core server;

means for receiving the identity of a candidate node server television set-top box from the core server;

means for receiving content from a node server television set-top box.

77. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media encoded with one or more computer programs including instructions for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

instructions for receiving a request from a client for specified content;

instructions for communicating to the client the identity of a node server having the specified content stored thereon, thereby enabling the client to request transmission of the specified content from the node server; and

instructions for ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client, wherein an owner of the node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of the specified content to the client.

78. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, wherein the instructions for ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client further comprise instructions for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content.

79. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 78, wherein the instructions for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content further comprise instructions for obtaining information regarding when the content was delivered.

80. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 78, wherein the instructions for obtaining information regarding the characteristics of the transmission of the content further comprise instructions for obtaining information regarding the bandwidth and/or latency performance associated with the transmission of the content.

81. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for identifying a plurality of node servers within the network that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers; and

instructions for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the specified content via the network from one of the candidate node servers.

82. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 81, further comprising:

instructions for determining the location of the client within the network;

instructions for identifying the locations of the plurality of node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

wherein the instructions for selecting one or more candidate node servers further comprise instructions for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client.

83. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 82, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

84. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content; and

instructions for providing the specified content to the node server.

85. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 84, wherein the instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content further comprise:

instructions for identifying the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for identifying the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

86. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 85, wherein the instructions for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers comprise instructions for performing an annealing method.

87. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for storing data identifying available sets of content that can be obtained by a client; and

instructions for providing an identification of available sets of content to the client.

88. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising instructions for storing data identifying the location of the node server.

89. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for storing content at a node server;

instructions for receiving a request at a node server to transmit content to a client; and

instructions for transmitting content from a node server to a client in response to a request for that content.

90. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 89, further comprising:

instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for providing the specified content to the node server; and

instructions for receiving at the node server the specified content provided by the core server.

91. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 89, further comprising:

instructions for transmitting from the client a request for specified content to the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the identity of a node server from the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the specified content from a node server.

92. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 77, further comprising:

instructions for transmitting from the client a request for specified content to the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the identity of a node server from the core server; and

instructions for receiving at the client the specified content from a node server.

93. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 92, further comprising instructions for transmitting a request from the client to the node server to transmit specified content to the client.

94. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 92, further comprising:

instructions for monitoring the characteristics of the transmission of the specified content from the node server to obtain auditing information regarding the transmission of the specified content from the node server to the client; and

instructions for transmitting the auditing information to the core server.

95. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media encoded with one or more computer programs including instructions for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

instructions for receiving a request for content from a client;

instructions for determining the location of the client within the network;

instructions for identifying the location of a plurality of node servers within the network that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon;

instructions for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client; and

instructions for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

96. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 95, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

97. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 95, further comprising instructions for storing a topological database including a topological map of the network, wherein the instructions for selecting use the topological map in making determinations of topological proximity to the client.

98. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 97, wherein the topological database further includes data regarding bandwidth capacity and/or latency between at least some of the network sites included in the topological map.

99. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 95, further comprising instructions for ascertaining which of the one or more of the candidate node servers transmitted requested content to the client, wherein an owner of such node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of requested content to the client.

100. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 95, further comprising:

instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content; and

instructions for providing the specified content to the node server.

101. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 100, wherein the instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content further comprise:

instructions for identifying the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for identifying the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

102. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 101, wherein the instructions for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers further comprise instructions for performing an annealing method.

103. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 95, further comprising:

instructions for storing data identifying available sets of content that can be obtained by a client; and

instructions for providing an identification of available sets of content to the client.

104. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 95, further comprising instructions for storing data identifying content stored by the plurality of node servers.

105. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 95, further comprising:

instructions for storing at least part of the requested content on a node server;

instructions for receiving a request at a node server to transmit content to the client; and

instructions for transmitting the requested content from the node server to the client.

106. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 105, further comprising:

instructions for transmitting a request for content from the client to the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the identity of one or more candidate node servers from the core server;

instructions for selecting one or more of the candidate node servers from which to obtain content;

instructions for transmitting a request from a client to a selected node server to transmit content to the client; and

instructions for receiving content at the client in response to the request transmitted to the node server.

107. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 95, further comprising:

instructions for transmitting a request for content from the client to the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the identity of one or more candidate node servers from the core server;

instructions for selecting one or more of the candidate node servers from which to obtain content;

instructions for transmitting a request from a client to a selected node server to transmit content to the client; and

instructions for receiving content at the client in response to the request transmitted to the node server.

108. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media encoded with one or more computer programs including instructions for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

instructions for identifying which of a plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node servers that are part of the network, wherein at least one of the plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content is stored on redundant node servers;

instructions for receiving a request from a client that is part of the network for transmission of a set of content to the client, wherein at least part of the requested set of content is stored on redundant node servers;

instructions for selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that have stored thereon at least part of the requested set of content; and

instructions for communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

109. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 108, wherein the candidate node servers do not include all of the redundant node servers on which requested content is stored.

110. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 108, further comprising instructions for storing data representing a topological map of the network and instructions for determining the location of the client within the network, and wherein the instructions for selecting one or more candidate node servers further comprise instructions for selecting one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client.

111. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 110, wherein the determination of topological proximity to the client is performed using a breadth-first search to identify node servers that satisfy a criterion regarding topological proximity to the client.

112. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 108, further comprising instructions for ascertaining which of the one or more of the candidate node servers transmitted requested content to the client, wherein an owner of such node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of requested content to the client.

113. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 108, further comprising:

instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content; and

instructions for providing the specified content to the node server.

114. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 113, wherein the instructions for identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content further comprises:

instructions for identifying the location of a prospective node server that desires to act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for identifying the location of one or more other existing node servers that can act as a node server for distribution of the specified content;

instructions for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers, wherein the prospective node server is selected as a node server for distribution of the specified content if the prospective node server satisfies a criterion regarding topological proximity to the existing node servers.

115. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 114, wherein the instructions for determining the topological proximity of the prospective node server to the existing node servers further comprises instructions for performing an annealing method.

116. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 108, further comprising:

instructions for storing data identifying available sets of content that can be obtained by a client; and

instructions for providing an identification of available sets of content to the client.

117. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 108, further comprising instructions for storing data identifying which of the plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node servers.

118. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 108, further comprising:

instructions for storing a set of content or part of a set of content on a node server;

instructions for receiving a request at a node server to transmit a set of content or part of a set of content to the client; and

instructions for transmitting the requested set of content or part of a set of content to the client.

119. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 118, further comprising:

instructions for transmitting a request for a set of content from the client to the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the identity of one or more candidate node servers from the core server;

instructions for selecting one or more of the candidate node servers from which to obtain content;

instructions for transmitting a request from a client to a selected node server to transmit a set of content or part of a set of content to the client; and

instructions for receiving a set of content or part of a set of content at the client in response to the request transmitted to the node server.

120. (Original) A computer readable storage medium or media as in Claim 108, further comprising:

instructions for transmitting a request for a set of content from the client to the core server;

instructions for receiving at the client the identity of one or more candidate node servers from the core server;

instructions for selecting one or more of the candidate node servers from which to obtain content;

instructions for transmitting a request from a client to a selected node server to transmit a set of content or part of a set of content to the client; and

instructions for receiving a set of content or part of a set of content at the client in response to the request transmitted to the node server.

121. (Original) A method for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising the steps of:

identifying a network site that will act as a node server for distribution of specified content;

providing the specified content to the node server;

receiving a request from a client for the specified content;

communicating the identity of the node server to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the specified content from the node server; and

ascertaining that the node server transmitted the specified content to the client, wherein an owner of the node server is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of the specified content to the client.

122. (Original) A method for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising the steps of:

receiving a request for content from a client;

determining the location of the client within the network;

identifying the location of a plurality of node servers within the network that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon;

selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client; and

communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

123. (Original) A method for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising the steps of:

identifying which of a plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node servers that are part of the network, wherein at least one of the plurality of sets of content or

parts of the plurality of sets of content is stored on redundant node servers;

receiving a request for a set of content from a client that is part of the network, wherein at least part of the requested set of content is stored on redundant node servers;

selecting from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that have stored thereon at least part of the requested set of content; and

communicating the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

124. (New) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

a receiver, wherein:

the receiver is adapted to receive a request from a client for specified content; and

the receiver is adapted to receive an identification of a node server that transmitted the specified content to the client, wherein an owner of the node server so identified is offered an incentive as compensation for transmission of the specified content to the client; and

a transmitter, wherein the transmitter is adapted to communicate to the client the identity of a node server having the specified content stored thereon, thereby enabling the client to request transmission of the specified content from the node server so identified.

125. (New) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

a receiver, wherein the receiver is adapted to receive a request for content from a client;

a processor, wherein:

the processor is adapted to determine the location of the client within the network;

the processor is adapted to identify the location of a plurality of node servers within the network that have at least part of the requested content stored thereon; and

the processor is adapted to select from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that are determined to be topologically proximate to the client; and

a transmitter, wherein the transmitter is adapted to communicate the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

126. (New) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a network, comprising:

a receiver, wherein the receiver is adapted to receive a request from a client that is part of the network for transmission of a set of content to the client, wherein at least part of the requested set of content is stored on redundant node servers;

a processor, wherein:

the processor is adapted to identify which of a plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node servers that are part of the network, at least one of the plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content being stored on redundant node servers; and

the processor is adapted to select from the plurality of node servers one or more candidate node servers that have stored thereon at least part of the requested set of content; and

a transmitter, wherein the transmitter is adapted to communicate the identity of the candidate node servers to the client to enable the client to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node servers.

127. (New) Apparatus for effecting the provision of content over a television network, comprising:

a receiver, wherein the receiver is adapted to receive a request from a client television set-top box that is part of the network for transmission of a set of content to the client television set-top box, wherein at least part of the requested set of content is stored on one or more node server television set-top boxes;

a processor, wherein:

the processor is adapted to identify which of a plurality of sets of content or parts of the plurality of sets of content are stored by each of a plurality of node server television set-top boxes that are part of the network; and

the processor is adapted to select from the one or more node server television set-top boxes one or more candidate node server television set-top boxes; and

a transmitter, wherein the transmitter is adapted to communicate the identity of the candidate node server television set-top boxes to the client television set-top box to enable the client television set-top box to request transmission of the requested content via the network from one or more of the candidate node server television set-top boxes.